

Ladder Extends 3 Feet Above Landings 1926.1053(b)(1)

Rank in Frequency Cited #21

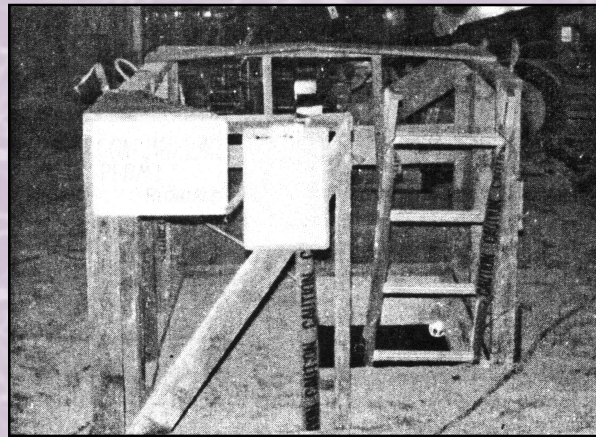
Rule

When using portable ladders to access an upper landing surface, the ladder side rails must extend at least 3 feet (.9 m) above the landing surface where the ladder is being used; or when such an extension is not possible because of the ladder's length, the ladder must be secured at its top to a rigid support that will not deflect, and a grasping device—such as a grabrail—must be provided to assist employees in mounting and dismounting the ladder. The extension must never be such that ladder deflection under a load would, by itself, cause the ladder to slip off its support.

Intent

The rule protects employees during two critical phases of ladder climbing:

- When employees are on the ladder and their movement may affect the ladder and its support points, making it slip or fall; and
- When the employee is either getting on or off the ladder. If nothing is available to grab and provide support, the employee will be in a bent-over position and his or her center of gravity may be outside the vertical line of normal body position, making the employee vulnerable to a fall.



☐ VIOLATION

☒ **IN COMPLIANCE**

The portable ladder extends 3 feet above the opening (landing) of the confined space.

Note: The guarding of the floor hole except at the entrance for the ladder is acceptable.

The rule specifies: Side rails must extend 3 feet above the landing. Or when this is not possible, secure side rails at the top to a rigid support—e.g., by tying with rope or boxing in with lumber—and provide a grab device. The grasping device can be made of metal or lumber and can be part of the structure, providing its location does not create a hazard in itself and it can be easily grasped. In addition, secure ladders to prevent them from deflecting and slipping while in use.

Hazards

- Slip and fall from elevation.
- Probable injuries range from death to broken bones and sprains/strains.

(Among Other) Suggested Abatements

- Abatement is obvious. Construct/use ladders according to specification requirements.
- Instruct employees and supervisors to inspect ladders during each shift in their work area.

Selected Case Histories

An employee climbing a 10-foot ladder to access a landing 9 feet above the adjacent floor fell when the ladder slid down. He sustained fatal injuries. Although the ladder had slip-resistant feet, it was not secured, and the railings did not extend 3 feet above the landing.

Comments

- This standard covers only portable ladders. A similar requirement for fixed ladders is outlined in *Title 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1926.1053(a) (24)*.
- This is a specification standard that is easily identified and substantiated as a violation—as evidenced by its high ranking on the 100 Most Cited Physical List. Therefore, the contractor must continually audit the site to ensure compliance with this rule.

Additional Documents to Aid in Compliance

- 29 CFR Subpart X. JSHQ